
■ LIFESTYLE/D1 Prom dos and don'ts

■ WORLD/A10 Lethal bird flu virus spreads to Africa

■ BUSINESS/B1 Coco-based exports jumped 14.6% in 2005

■ WORLD/A10 VP Cheney lacked hunting license


GI in hot water for shooting stray animals at Sulu camp

By Dona Z. Pazzibugan

PERHAPS THIS AMERICAN SOLDIER LIKES LIVE subjects for target practice.

[illegible]

GI /A20

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS · FEARLESS VIEWS

Wednesday, February 15, 2006 | Vol. 21 / No. 69 | website: www.inq7.net

SC okays filing of charges against Marcopper officials

By Armand N. Nocum

THE SUPREME COURT HAS GIVEN THE GREEN light for the indictment of officials of Marcopper Mining Corp. for allegedly causing environmental damage in Marinduque a decade ago.

In a 17-page decision released yesterday, the high court turned down the petition by Marcopper officers John Eric Loney, Steven Paul Reid and Pedro Hernandez seeking to quash the case.

SC OKAYS /A8



ROSES FROM SPECIAL KIDS President Macapagal-Arroyo gets red roses from hearing-impaired students of the Philippine Institute for the Deaf in Pasay City. The President visited the school on Valentine's Day.



FROM THE INSIDE looking out. Peering through the gate of his Tanay resthouse, former President Joseph Estrada watches actress Susan Roces and former Vice President Teofisto Guingona plant seedlings to launch his Freedom from Hunger movement.

Gov't raises La Niña alert

All agencies ordered to prepare for heavy rains during summer

By Blanche S. Rivera

LA NIÑA, A WEATHER phenomenon characterized by heavy rains, is coming.

[illegible]

GOV'T RAISES /A20



MORE THAN 4,000 people head for safety after nonstop rains spawned floods and mudslides on Panaon Island, Leyte. With total damage to crops and property that could reach ₱100 million, the government has placed the province under a state of calamity. (See story on Page A18.)

Ombudsman faces contempt over ₱1.3-B Comelec mess

By Armand N. Nocum, Jerome Aning and Philip C. Tubeza

NEWLY APPOINTED OMBUDSman Merceditas Gutierrez faces contempt charges for the failure of her office to determine the criminal liability of Benjamin Abalos, chair of the Commission on Elections, and other poll officials linked to irregularities in the ₱1.3-billion automated counting machine deal.

[illegible]

OMBUDSMAN A8

GMA hits 'Wowowee' organizers; ABS-CBN miffed

By Christine O. Avendaño and Lolla B. Salaverria

PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-ARroyo yesterday took to task the "organizers" behind the daily game show that triggered the Feb. 4 stampede, but did not name ABS-CBN.

[illegible]

GMA HITS A6

OFW blew lid off secret 'shabu' flea market

By Ramon Tulfo

IF THE PEOPLE AT THE MARKOSIN compound hadn't beaten up one of their customers, the "shabu flea market" in the heart of Pasig City might still be doing brisk business today.

The customer was an overseas Filipino worker on a long vacation from the Middle East.

[illegible]

OFW /A20



'Love' fills the halls of Congress

By Michael Lim Ubac and Norman Bordadora

LOVE, ACTUALLY, FILLED THE HALLS OF Congress on Valentine's Day.

[illegible]

LOVE /A4

Blasted hopes, broken dreams for 14 minors

By Dona Pazzibugan and Edson Tandoc Jr.

ONE IS A 17-YEAR-OLD GIRL WHO is eight months pregnant. Another is aged 14 with a 4-month-old fetus growing inside her.

[illegible]

MATTER /A20

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FrontPage

Senate told: Cha-cha or bust

SPEAKER JOSE DE VENECIA YESTERDAY WARNED SENators opposed to Charter change that they risked becoming "irrelevant" if they failed to support the shift to a parliamentary system.

AFP warns would-be rebs as Magdalo boys go to court







Sotto urges seizure of 'shabu tiangge' property for drug rehab center

GMA: Face of Edsa has changed



Tax evaders blamed for huge debt burden

Collective penance

National debt



Solons expect Moody's to change mood on RP

By Michael Lim Ubac

Court extends Nur's leave

MOTORING

New Galant to face off vs Camry, Accord


GALANT 240M

By Tessa R. Salazar

Aggressive product offensive

Introductory sales strong

From China Motors

FIA official arriving for AAP celebration

ON THE ROAD



Aida Sevilla-Mendoza

Fast Lane is one of the anniversary projects of AAP's motor sports committee

Motor sports

Tourism support

Road safety

A history, a worship of heat

MY DRIFT



Andre Fulmar

History of the genre

More familiar image

New wave

GMA hits 'Wowowee' organizers; ABS-CBN miffed

Government's role

Invitations

Continuing aid

71 Dreams Foundation

'Love' fills the halls of Congress

If you love the country

Cookies and chocolates

Resign

Newsbriefs

Erap still has clout with poor, says GMA

[illegible]

Black hearts of protest

[illegible]

Cha-cha info drive set

[illegible]

No hands to fight smuggling

[illegible]

Pinoys insist on 'pasalubong'

[illegible]

Airline raps new security

[illegible]

Ombudsman faces contempt...





SC okays filing of charges against Marcopper officials

X5 Security: discreet yet potent vehicle

By Charles E. Buban

THE PURPOSE OF RIDING in an armored vehicle is to be able to thwart an initial armed attack—should such a situation occur—and get out of the place as quickly as possible.

Increase in threat

Integrated

Not compromised

Paging Mayor Belmonte, MMDA

FULL TANK

Al Mendoza

The WORLD

Lethal bird flu virus spreads to Africa



PARIS—MORE EUROPEAN NATIONS ARE TAKING precautionary measures as bird flu spreads, with a Greek duck hunter undergoing tests to confirm whether he is the first person on the continent to contract the potentially lethal virus.



Cheney lacked hunting license

Turkey museum exhibits world's oldest love poem

Chaos again mars Saddam's trial

[illegible]

AFP

Iran defies West, starts enrichment work





CUPID-STRUCK

Protests mar Haiti vote counting

French doctors to study Joan of Arc's ashes





New fish species, seaweeds found off Caribbean

WorldBriefs

Blast kills 4 US soldiers

2 Kenyan ministers resign

Man nabbed for Iraq abuse

INQUIRER

Opinion

Indivisible freedoms

Editorial

LAST FRIDAY, A FUNERAL WAS HELD IN ROME FOR Fr. Andrea Santoro, a missionary priest killed the week before in Turkey. Camillo Cardinal Ruini of Rome announced at the funeral that he wanted to open the process for the beatification and eventual canonization of the priest. Santoro, he said, was a martyr. He was definitely a kind and pious man: Pope Benedict XVI ordered a letter Santoro wrote to him, on behalf of three Catholic women asking the Pope to visit their parish, published in Osservatore Romano, the official Vatican newspaper.

In Turkey, the person accused of killing Santoro "admitted that he was driven by hatred aroused by the publication of the caricatures of Mohammed published in the Western press," according to one press account. The accused murderer was under the impression that Santoro was actively trying to convert Muslims to Catholicism. In fact, the Italian's ministry was to attend to small, isolated Catholic communities in areas that once comprised the Catholic settlements of antiquity.

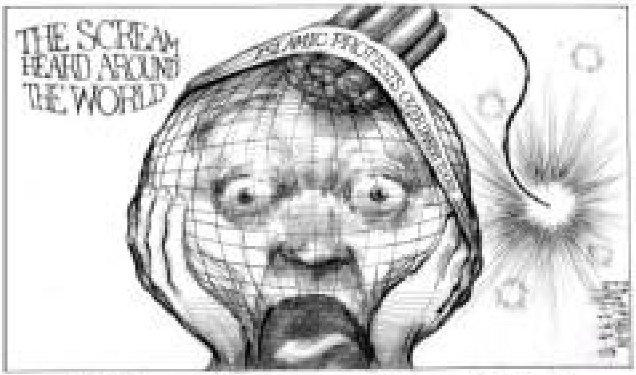
While praising the Christian virtues of Santoro, and proclaiming his worthiness to be considered a martyr—proof of which would immediately result in sainthood—Vatican officials have been careful not to lay blame at the doorstep of Islam, whether as a religion or a community. The kind of misunderstanding that would lead a man to kill another, in the name of God, all because of a profoundly irreligious act that took place a very long distance away, is in a sense a parable for our times. Thornton Wilder, in his short novel "The Bridge of San Luis Rey," tackled a profoundly religious question. In the book, a monk named Brother Juniper witnesses the "finest bridge in all Peru" collapse, killing five people. And he asks, "Why did it happen to those five?"

As a consequence of editorial cartoons being published in a Danish newspaper, the world has been asking the same question—in the Middle East, where, from Damascus and Teheran to Palestine and Baghdad, Muslims erupted in fury. Just as they did in Denmark itself, and all over Europe, and everywhere, from Pakistan and Indonesia to the Philippines, where Islamic communities are found. Days of anger and violence have resulted in the Islamic world engaging in soul-searching of its own. Yesterday, a meeting between the Danish prime minister and the leaders of Denmark's Muslim community led to calls on their co-religionists to "move on."

Excesses such as rioting and complications such as some irresponsible provocateurs inserting two cartoons (the most offensive ones) among the real cartoons circulated among Muslims aside, the Islamic world has been adamant about its belief that the Western press crossed the line. Non-Muslims have also observed that what the Western media attempted to paint as purely a question of freedom of expression was not that at all; it was a question of secular contempt for religious convention.

While the Philippines adheres to the principle of the separation of Church and State, and indeed, the Philippine media are heir to a tradition of anticlericalism dating to the Propaganda Movement, as a whole, Filipinos are profoundly respectful of religious conventions. Even the bigotry of certain Filipinos toward their Islamic countrymen does not extend to flagrantly heaping contempt on their faith. There are lines Filipinos do not cross, and rightly so (if only we did not cross some of those than we already do).

Islam and Christianity both pay the highest tribute to martyrs. Even secular societies consider martyrdom possible in defense of country or ideology. The question is whether any kind of creed, including secularism as understood in the West, calls for provocations that make it inevitable for people to become martyrs, whether unintentionally or by design. While we do not counsel self-censorship arising out of fear, we do believe that a proper recognition of the central role faith plays in the lives of millions would go far to avoid undue provocation against people who take their religion seriously. After all, since World War II, the world has rallied to defend the Four Freedoms: of speech and expression; of every person to worship God in his own way; from want; and from fear. They all go hand in hand, and to raise one over the other diminishes them all.



What's a police community precinct for?

As I See It



Neal H. Cruz

(Continued from last Monday)

THE INTERSECTION ON COMMONWEALTH Avenue and Tandang Sora in Quezon City is a dangerous place to cross. Commonwealth slopes down here and vehicles coming from the Quezon Memorial Circle race down the incline as they battle for the commuters waiting for rides near the corner. There is a waiting shed farther up, but nobody uses it. There is a pedestrian lane and yellow boxes clearly marked on the pavement, but drivers pay no attention to them. They speed on as though in a race, and woe to pedestrians who happen to be in their way.

Even when there are traffic enforcers, they do not stop the vehicles to allow pedestrians to cross safely. Jeepneys stop right on top of the pedestrian lane, beside a big "Strictly No Loading/Unloading, 10" sign, to load and unload passengers. Barkers standing beside the sign call for passengers. The enforcers see all these but do nothing. The policemen in the police community precinct headquarters also see these but also do nothing.

The Metro Manila Development Authority tried to remedy the situation by constructing a pedestrian overpass across Commonwealth during the 2004 election campaign, with a big billboard announcing it to be a project of President Macapagal-Arroyo, complete with her smiling face. After the elections, construction was stopped and the billboard was taken away. The overpass remains unfinished and pedestrians still have to risk their lives when they cross the street.

I asked MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando about this, and he replied that he had suspended the construction because there were no more funds and also because the foot of the southern end of the overpass was in the wrong place. Commonwealth will be widened some more, he said, and the stairs going up the overpass will have to be moved farther to the Mercury Drug Store and the KFC fast food outlet.

Happily, there are signs that the widening of Commonwealth in the area will begin soon and the overpass will be finished. Meanwhile, can't the authorities tell the police and traffic enforcers to enforce traffic rules and stop vehicles at the pedestrian lane to allow pedestrians to cross safely?

I asked Fernando why the police in the community precinct headquarters do not help maintain orderly traffic, and he said the MMDA has not deputized them. "Maybe we will," he added.

I posed the same question to top police officials and they replied that it is the duty of every policeman to help maintain traffic whether or not he is deputized by the MMDA. They promised to look into the matter.

That was weeks ago. Until now, there has been no change in the behavior of the police or traffic enforcers, whether they are the MMDA's Metroaides or City Hall's Volunteers.

What is a police community precinct for if it cannot impose law and order in its place of assignment? Is this not the reason it was put there in the first place? If people see drivers violating traffic rules with impunity in the presence of cops and traffic aides, they are tempted to also violate traffic rules. They lose respect for the law and the police.

When the widening of Commonwealth is completed, I suggest that the two waiting sheds be painted in the trademark "Fernando pink" to make them more visible. Also, there should be benches so commuters can sit down while waiting and either a rope or steel railings should be put up to make them fall in line. Two more waiting sheds, one on each side of the street, at the eastern foot of the flyover should be built.

But can't the police keep the vendors on the sidewalk at the subpass on Quezon Avenue so they don't spill out into the street and constrict the passage of vehicles?

The jeepney terminal at the corner of Tandang Sora should be removed. The Tandang Sora jeepney route is now from Aurora Boulevard to Novaliches, thus making the terminals behind the University of the Philippines campus and at the Commonwealth corner unnecessary. And the "No Parking, No Loading/Unloading" rule should be strictly enforced.

PNP Director General Arturo Lomibao, MMDA Chair Bayani Fernando and Quezon City Mayor Feliciano Belmonte should visit the place incognito so they can see for themselves what's going on.

* * *

The two-day air talks between the governments of the Philippines and Bahrain will begin tomorrow at Clark Air Base. According to sources, the Philippines is prepared to give Bahrain all it is asking for—to the detriment of overseas Filipino workers, local business and industry and our national aviation policy.

Bahrain is a tiny island in the Persian Gulf that hosts only 30,000 OFWs and produces only 1,000 tourists to the Philippines each year. But its appetite is very big. Its flag carrier deploys 61,000 seats to Manila per year and now wants to increase this to 107,000. At the air talks, Bahrain will ask that the present four flights weekly on the Manila-Bahrain route be increased to 10 flights. It has existing rights to fly to Cebu and Clark twice weekly each but has never exercised these rights.

What should have priority is a new air agreement with Saudi Arabia, not with Bahrain. We have about a million OFWs in Saudi Arabia but Philippine Airlines announced a suspension of Manila-Riyadh flights because it has been losing on the route for decades. It has proposed instead a new Manila-Dubai-Saudi Arabia route. The Philippine air panel should concentrate on this instead of pampering the Bahrainis.

Zombied

There's the Rub



Conrado de Quiros

SOMEONE ASKED ME RECENTLY WHY I hadn't considered to see the 21st-century version of the 1960s British invasion, which is the Oldies Invasion, and rushed to the shows featuring the hit groups of that decade.

For several reasons, I said. One is that though I like to indulge in nostalgia like the next fellow, I do not like to indulge in perpetual nostalgia and cling to the popular music of my generation like a drowning man.

[illegible]

A frenzy of assigning blame

ANALYSIS



Amando Doronila

Sexuality

PINOY KASI



Michael L. Tan

Romance at a certain age

AT LARGE



Rina Jimenez-David

A fencing party in Madrid

LOOKING BACK



Ambeth R. Ocampo

Urgent need to reorganize Philippine tourism industry

LETTERS

No bad news if not for GMA

Yes, zero-waste mining is possible

Focus anti-poverty on poorest regions

Politics not for Pacman

For mining but ...

INQUIRER Northern Luzon

Indigenous peoples slam bio-prospecting



"COCA-COLA Time" by Rael Bimmyag

In Granada, Spain

THE GENE TECHNOLOGY, WHICH THE INDUStrialized world sees as the "wave of the future," may be something new. But for many indigenous and local peoples from five continents, who were in Granada, Spain, recently to help shape an international system on access to and benefit sharing from biodiversity resources, it is just a new, sophisticated tool of the more powerful countries to replay old colonial ways of appropriating the resources of weaker countries.

Documenting disappearing rituals of the Cordillera

By Elizabeth Lolarga

THEIR CONSTANT COMPANIONSHIP and commitment to documenting the rituals and disappearing traditions of the Cordillera have made many tribals mistake photographers Tommy Hafalla, 48, and Rael Bimmyag, 28, as a father-and-son team.

Across the NATION

GMA OKs ₱128-B Cagayan flood control

TUGUEGARAO CITY—PRESIDENT MACAPAGAL-Arroyo has approved a 25-year master plan proposed by Cagayan Valley officials to control floods in the region.

Senate, House to probe Semirara spill

By TJ. Burgonio

IN THE KNOW

Floods, rains force evacuation of 4,000 from 15 Leyte villages

Forms for Cha-cha sign bid unavailable to LGUs



Court seeks custody of nursing exam results

Roundup

3 village officials shot dead

2 nabbed for marijuana

Ex-bank employee shot dead

Legazpi rural bank robbed

Artists' show in Legazpi



VALENTINE'S GIFT

Jobseekers lose ₱6M in Mindanao

Chlorine sent to flooded Surigao towns



Indigenous peoples …

Bio-piracy

Gov't raises La Niña alert

Switch crops

Floods in the Visayas

'Hardest hit'

IN THE KNOW

Floods (December 2005 to February 2006)

First week of December

Dec. 17

Dec. 22

Dec. 24

Dec. 27-29

Jan. 25

February

GI in Sulu in hot water for shooting stray animals

On the beach

Civic missions

Valentine's Day march

Blasted hopes, broken dreams for 14 minors

Parents tested positive

Young runners

Wrong values

Police involved

Medina's side

OFW blew lid off secret 'shabu' flea market

Hidden camera

Man of the hour

Shootout feared

Ground assault

Countersigns used

Handling the children

Women without money

METRO

Hope floats for minors in prison

METROBRIEFS

No blowing of horns in 'Silent Zones'



Accidental shooting, suicide or foul play?

Manila cops shape up



Fiery Valentine's Day

3 hurt in Pasig accident

St. Theresa's College-Manila homecoming

No more Fridays with Dr. Alfredo

Bagatsing: 89



BAGATSING



Metro garbage fate still hangs

Gate issue resurfaces at BF Homes


Your first video streaming experience on 3G begins NOW!
SMART 3G
You don't have to miss the action because you can watch your favorite games, videos and TV programs through the power of Smart 3G. Starting today, Smart subscribers with 3G phones* can avail of this service on a FREE trial basis in selected key cities nationwide.
Another innovation brought to you by the leader in wireless communications.
Text 3G to 60034 or go to www.smart.com.ph for more information. For inquiries, please call the Smart Hotline at *888 or visit any Smart Wireless Center nationwide.

SPORTS

Giants seek equalizer versus wounded Bulls



By Jose Navarro

IT'S RED BULLS TURN TO make the adjustments.



Painters ready for showdown sans Tangkay

Cordero keeps top post



San Beda, St. Benilde booters dispute title

Moto Masters draws bets from 12 nations

PAL Interclub gets backing

Cuban maestro rejected

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad



New group can call itself BAP—Peping

But POC puts its foot down on old set of officers

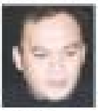


COJUANGCO: No to old BAP heads



LINA: Amenable to POC lead

RP's Sanchez shares lead in tough Cannes chess tilt



SANCHEZ

Wang's cagers plaster Altas for Inter-Club title

SPORTSWATCH

ACCA chess listing under way

Pacquiao favored in GCAP's San Juan tilt

18 fights on tap in Makati derby today

Las Piñas 3-cocker set Feb. 22 and 23

RACING TIPS

Lebron scores 44 as Cavs rip Spurs

NEW YORK—LEBRON JAMES scored 44 points to help the Cleveland Cavaliers end the San Antonio Spurs' nine-game winning streak with a 101-87 win over the defending NBA champions at the Quicken Loans Arena on Monday.

[illegible]



Jaidee eyes hat trick in KL tourney

[illegible]



Russians grab 12th straight pairs gold; US bets prevail

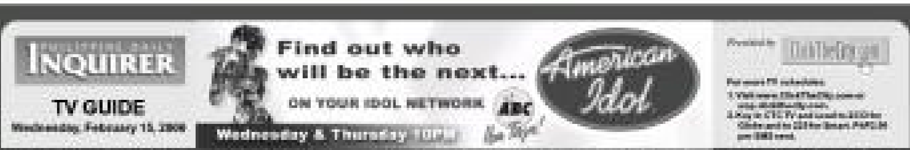
[illegible]

Agassi skips San Jose tilt with strained back

[illegible]



AGASSI



[illegible]

TV SCHEDULES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT PRIOR NOTICE.

Filipino-Mexican ring war looms

IN HUDDLE



Beth Celis

Pacman sees Viloria winning by stoppage





Cordero bags nat'l drag racing crown

RP muay team spots in world tilt at stake

ENTERTAINMENT

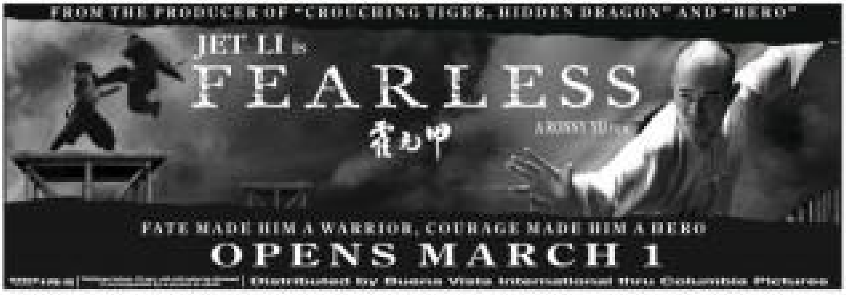


TAKE FIVE

Mowelfund mediatrix

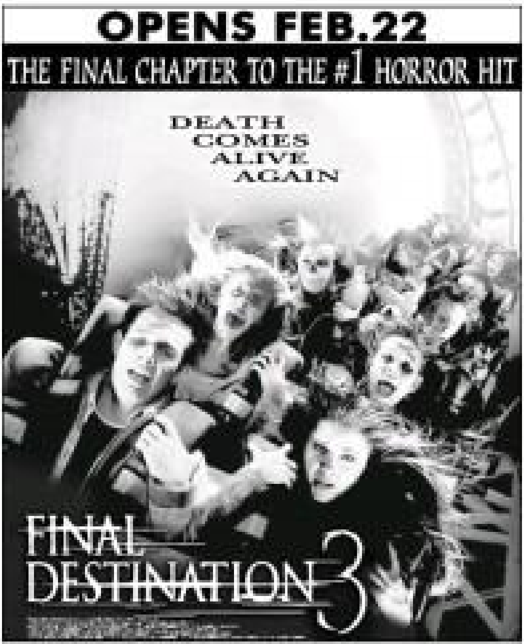
... a.k.a. Boots Anson-Roa, who says she will move heaven and earth—and eat humble pie—for the welfare of movie workers

Mowelfund mediatrix









ROUNDUP

'Panther' strikes



NORAH Jones

Film debut

Out of control

Peter Benchley, 65

ROBINSONS MOVIEWORLD CINEMAS MOVIE GUIDE

CINEMA ACCESS
635-5555
FOR ALL BRANCHES

GALLERIA

1 MUNICH • TWO	6 AEON FLUX
2 CLOSE TO YOU	7 FIREWALL
3 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	8 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
4 GOAL	9 NEW WORLD
5 PINK PANTHER	10 FUN WITH DICK AND JANE

ERMITA

1 CLOSE TO YOU	
2 FUN with DICK and JANE FIREWALL	5 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
3 NEW WORLD I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	6 PINK PANTHER
4 AEON FLUX	7 GOAL

METRO EAST

1 NEW WORLD	5 FUN with DICK and JANE
2 PINK PANTHER	6 FIREWALL
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	7 CLOSE TO YOU
4 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN	8 WALK THE LINE

NOVALICHES

1 PINK PANTHER	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
2 FUN with DICK and JANE	5 GOAL
3 FIREWALL	6 CLOSE TO YOU
	7 AEON FLUX

CITIQUARE MALABON / PIONEER

CITIQUARE MALABON	PIONEER
1 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	1 PINK PANTHER
2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
3 RESERVE	3 AEON FLUX
4 RESERVE	4 CLOSE TO YOU



STA. ROSA / LIPA

STA. ROSA	LIPA
1 PINK PANTHER	1 PINK PANTHER
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	2 WALK THE LINE
3 SAW 2	3 CLOSE TO YOU
4 CLOSE TO YOU	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD 2	5 SAW 2

DASMARINAS / ANGELES

DASMARINAS	ANGELES
1 PINK PANTHER	1 CLOSE TO YOU
2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	2 FUN with DICK and JANE
3 WALK THE LINE	3 PINK PANTHER
4 CLOSE TO YOU	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 UNDERWORLD 2	

IMUS / STARMILLS

IMUS	STARMILLS
1 PINK PANTHER	1 UNDERWORLD 2
2 UNDERWORLD 2	2 CLOSE TO YOU
3 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	3 FUN with DICK and JANE
4 MUNICH	4 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
5 FIREWALL	5 PINK PANTHER
6 CLOSE TO YOU	6 FIREWALL

BACOLOD / ILOILO

BACOLOD	ILOILO
1 PINK PANTHER	1 BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN
2 CLOSE TO YOU	2 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU
3 SAW 2	3 UNDERWORLD 2
4 FUN with DICK and JANE	4 CLOSE TO YOU
5 I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU	5 PINK PANTHER
6 BLOODRAYNE	6 SAW 2

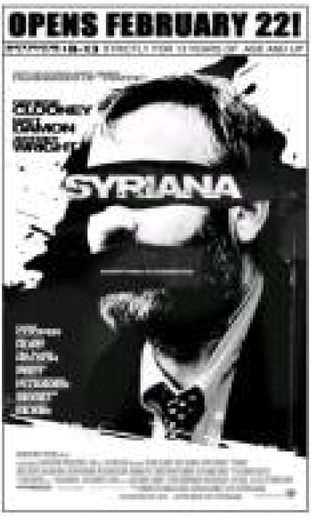


DID YOU KNOW...











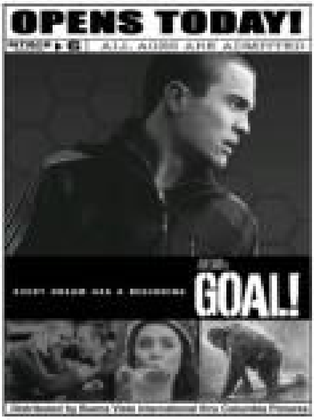
Undeputed champion and other boob-tube booboos

VIEWFINDER



Nestor U. Torre

> Was the champ 'outstanding in academics even as a young student?'

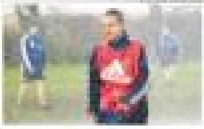






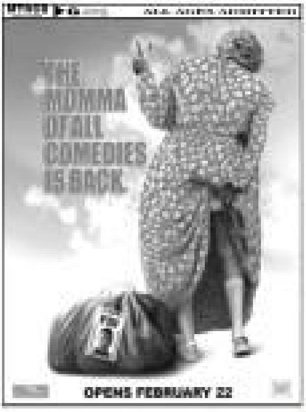


Opening Today



From page A2-4

possibly a lucrative franchise), the "sports underdog" story has a "poor Mexican-American immigrant" (Becker) as its hero. A naturally gifted soccer player, he's discovered by a British talent scout who helps him get to the Newcastle United, England's premier soccer club. Rick Groen of Globe and Mail thinks it's "a romanticized tale in [illegible] . . . And a bit more invention and creativity would have made this a true winner." Jon [illegible] of Film Focus points out that at least "[illegible] gets its football very very right. The action is swift, the atmosphere is perfect . . . The story doesn't hurt as well. We've seen the rags-to-riches tale a thousand times . . ."

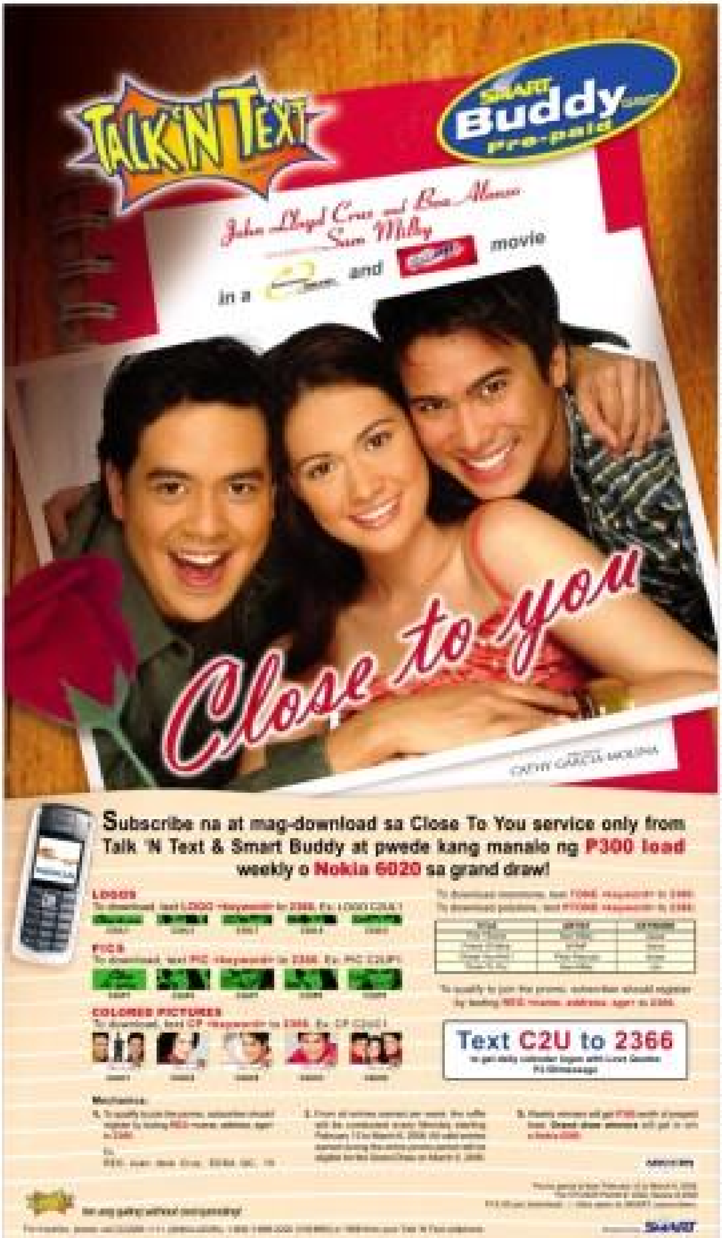




Opening Today

Close to You





Brokeback Mountain

Stars Heath Ledger, Jake Gyllenhaal, Michelle Williams, Anne Hathaway

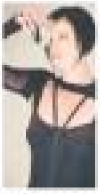
Directed by Ang Lee





The Pink Panther

Aeon Flux



Goal!

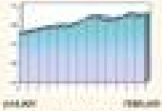
BUSINESS

Coco-based exports jumped 14.6% in '05

December performance very impressive, says industry group

EXPORT VOLUMES OF COCONUT-BASED PRODUCTS went up 14.6 percent in 2005 to 2.05 million metric tons owing to double-digit growth rates in all categories but one, according to an industry report.

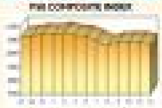
CURRENCIES



PESO-DOLLAR RATE

STOCK MARKET

PSE COMPOSITE INDEX



Shares close lower

Yield of 10-year bonds slides to 8.957%

WHAT'S INSIDE



Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of healthcare

SPECIAL REPORT

Intellectual property vs public health

Gov't raises Customs' revenue collection target for this year

State bank expects '06 profit to hit ₱3.4-3.5B

Expanding scope, scale of operations



DAVID

PPA to float ₱2B worth of 7-yr notes

Debate on cheaper drugs rages amid high cost of healthcare

Government intervention

Debate rages



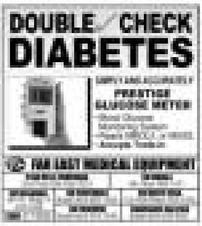
Investors trade in ₱66.1B in bonds

By Michelle V. Remo

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Robinson Land income increases 28% to ₱419M

ROBINSON LAND CORPORATION (RLC), the property development unit of the Gokongwei family, reported that its net income rose 28 percent to P419 million from October to December, from the P328 million posted the previous year.

During the first quarter of RLC's fiscal year in 2006, gross revenue also grew 38 percent to P1.72 billion from P1.25 billion.

RLC's fiscal year ends on Sept. 30.

"The strategic initiatives we made across four business units have translated to sustained growth and improved profitability," RLC executive vice-president Frederick C. Go said in a statement.

In its financial report to the Philippine Stock Exchange (PSE), RLC said revenues from its commercial centers increased to P872 million of total real estate revenues for the first quarter of fiscal year 2006, up from P774.9 million posted in the same period last year.

Its flagship malls—Robinsons Galleria and Robinsons Place Manila—continue to enjoy higher rental income, while new malls Robinsons Place Pioneer and Robinsons Place Angeles and the redeveloped Robinsons Place Novaliches are also contributing significantly to rental growth.

RLC high-rise buildings division's revenue grew by 84 percent to P320.7 million in the quarter ending December, from P280.3 million last year.

Its hotel division also posted gross revenues of P326.5 million for the first quarter compared to last year's P114.8 million due to the opening of Crowne Plaza Hotel. *Elisabeth L. Sanchez*

In aggressive Asia thrust, URC ups acquisition ante

By Elisabeth L. Sanchez

TO POWER ITS ASIAN EXPANSION, Universal Robina Corp. (URC) has raised $98 million from the sale of shares to both foreign and local investors.

The food and beverage arm of tycoon John Gokongwei is now actively scouting for acquisition targets in the snack food line in southeast Asia.

According to URC president Lance Gokongwei, the firm plans to spend P5.4 billion, representing a portion of its net proceeds from the share offering, to fund the expansion of its beverage line in Vietnam as well as the acquisition of additional snack lines in China, Asean countries and Vietnam as well.

The snack-rich firm, which has mapped out a bold expansion strategy in Asia, last August acquired a Chinese cereal brand, Nice Foods, which is expected to boost URC's sales in China.

But Gokongwei declined to disclose the acquisition price.

Also last year, it established a new biscuit plant in Thailand, and a candy and snack production facility in Vietnam; it beefed up spending for advertising and promotion for product launches in various international markets.

URC and its major shareholders recently offered a total of 625 million shares at P17 apiece, generating roughly P10.6 billion in proceeds. URC's sole international underwriter, UBS Investment Bank, has a stands to exercise an option to issue an additional 93.2 million secondary shares.

URC major shareholders JG Summit Holdings Inc., Express Holdings Inc., and Robinsons Supermarket Corporation also raised some P5.3 billion from the sale of 325 million secondary shares. Should URC's greenshoe option push through, they can raise an additional P1.6 billion for major shareholders.

Gokongwei said the JG Summit Group will use part of the proceeds to pay short-term debts.

URC said the total demand was in excess of its offered amount, reflecting hefty investor appetite for its shares.

Its shares, which resumed trading yesterday, closed at P18—50 centavos lower than its previous close of P18.50 on Feb. 6. URC shares were suspended from Feb. 7-13 to avoid price distortions, arising from the price setting process.

Aside from China, URC has operations in Thailand, Indonesia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore and Vietnam.

Smart launches 3G services in key cities

By Clarissa S. Batino

SMART COMMUNICATIONS INC. yesterday launched a program offering third generation, or 3G mobile, services in key cities covered by more than 300 cell sites nationwide.

"We can now say we are the first to offer the public the most modern innovation in mobile technology," said Smart head of wireless consumer division Rock Jimenez. "Now every other mobile carrier will just have to follow our lead."

3G allows video calls, video streaming and high-speed Internet access. For now, Smart's video calls are limited within network, but short films are readily available for streaming.

Smart and fierce rival Globe Telecom Inc., Jimenez said, had been battling it out to win the bragging rights as to who would first offer 3G services.

"Today we are throwing the knockout punch," Jimenez said during potential benefits of its first 3G trial open to all Smart subscribers with 3G enabled mobile phones.

Both major operators are set to offer 3G services within the first half of the year, possibly before the end of the first quarter.

Globe, a joint venture of Ayala Corp. and Singapore Telecom said it had started to "test drive" 3G with corporate clients Ayala Land, General Milling Corp., Sun Life of Canada, Prudential and the Aboitiz Group of Companies.

Philippine Stock Exchange

Currencies

Asian Spirit fills Laoag void

COCKTALES

Victor C. Agustin

Money-go-round

Heard through the grapevine

Coco-based ...

From page B1

Shares close lower

From page B1

Yield of 10-year ...

From page B1

Canada firms eye RP investment

Mission looking at former US military bases as possible sites

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LifeStyle

Editor Chelo Banal-Formoso
Chief of Correspondents Pam Pastor



Prom-tastic!

IT'S PROM TIME ONCE again! 2bU! wants to become a part of your special night. We have beauty tips and dress suggestions for girls. We even went to a fashion show to pick our numbers that would add oomph to your prom moment. And if you join our special prom contest, you have a chance of winning a great prize: having Shu Uemura's Xeng Zulueta do your makeup on the night of your prom!

We don't want to leave the guys out, either. We have prom dos and don'ts to make sure your prom goes smoothly and your night is as memorable as possible. Enjoy!



GLAM up in a black-and-white dress with matching gloves for a classy look.

Princess for a day

Text by Allison W. Lopez
Photos by Rudy Esperas

FOR A DRESS YOU'D probably wear only once or twice in your life, how much would you (or your parents) spend?

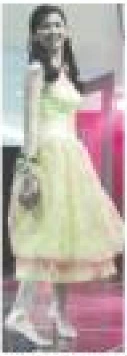
Not much, we guess, especially since you'd need matching shoes, bag, accessories, plus some prepping up for the big night. Whew.

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PRINCESS C3

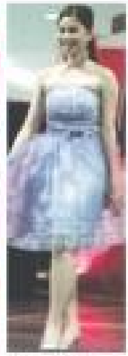














SM Department Store and Avel Bacudio join forces to make every teenager's dream night come true

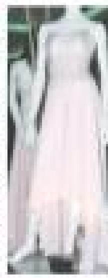
Princess for a day

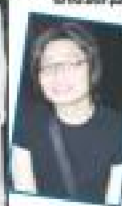


















Knockout ensembles

Stylish retail choices

WITH PROM SEASON fast approaching, it's time for teenagers to comb the metro in search of the perfect outfit for that one special night.





Hi-tech hair

Take a break from shampoo commercial-straight hair. This year, curly is the way to go





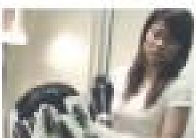






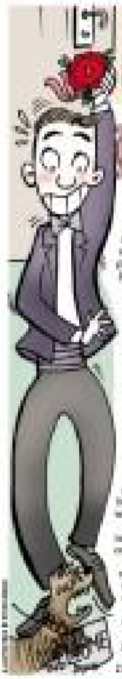
Have prom-pretty hair





LIFESTYLE





Prom dos and don'ts

By Cheryl Tiu

2BU Correspondent

Don't break up with your boyfriend before the prom. Do it afterward



Cool, boy

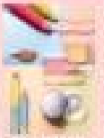
Your prom isn't the last night you'll ever be in the presence of the opposite sex, so take it easy, tiger

Simply sweet



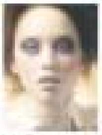
Sweet and sexy

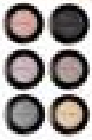




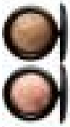
Sugary sweet













Prom-perfect makeup

